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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are offered to assist parents in helping their children deal with the information and emotions associated with the threat of nuclear war, life in the nuclear age, and the arms race. Suggestions are presented to parents to aid them in talking to their children at different developmental ages from birth to 18 years regarding their concerns and questions. Some of these suggestions are to give children a sense of security, to teach them to respect others and their environment, to discuss their questions, and to invite them to join discussion groups when they are older. Following this section are things for children to do to express their opposition to nuclear war such as writing to the president, telephoning the White House, writing to a pen pal in the Soviet Union, and helping with group projects. Parents are advised to talk to their children about the strength individuals and communities have to say "no" to war. Frequent questions that parents ask are presented, and answers are given to these questions. Several books are recommended which may be of interest to both parents and children. A brief statement on finding consolation and renewal concludes this pamphlet. (EM)

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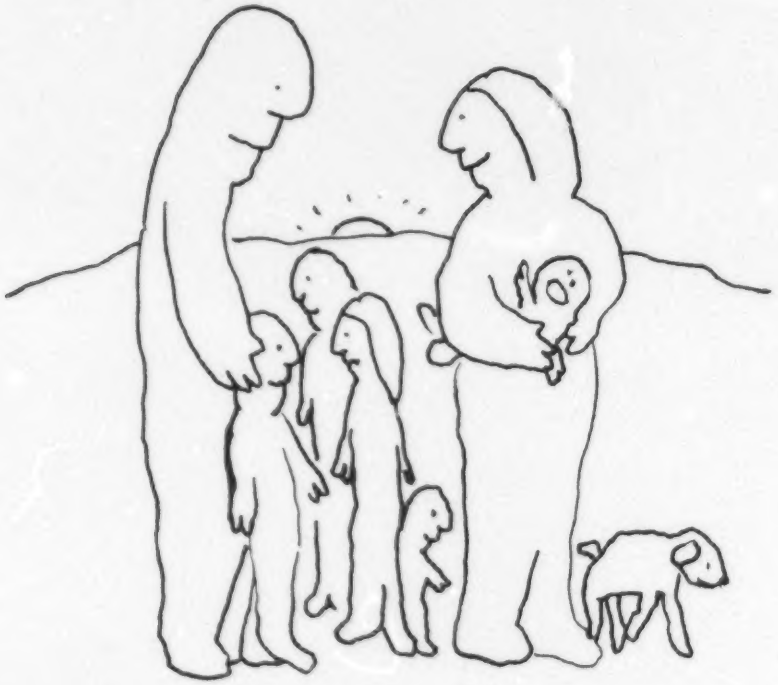
WHAT SHALL WE TELL THE CHILDREN?



"Out of the blue one morning, I imagined life with my husband and daughter without the threat of nuclear war. What tremendous relief I felt! As if a real weight had been lifted. I hadn't realized how much my life was affected by my fear of a nuclear holocaust. Since that day I see everything differently. The most important thing of all seems to be working to make that imaginary sweetness real."

Parenting in a Nuclear Age
Oakland, California
1983

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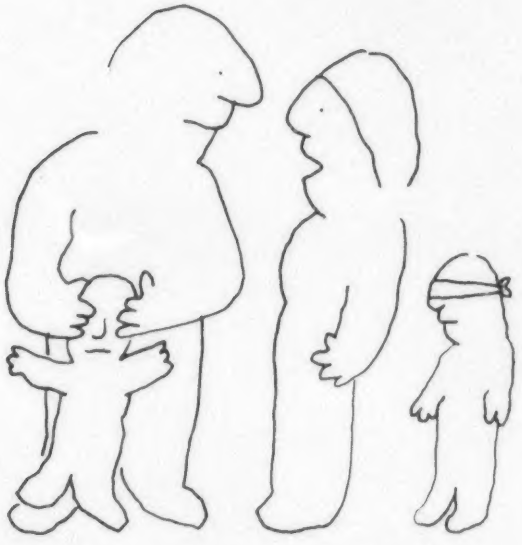


INTRODUCTION

Living in the nuclear age profoundly affects how we think, what we do and the kind of future we are able to imagine for ourselves and our children. Only within the past few years have most of us become familiar with phrases such as "melt down," "limited nuclear war" or "first strike capability." Along with our expanded vocabulary comes the new and terrifying awareness that nuclear war and the destruction of life as we know it is within the realm of possibility.

What impact does this consciousness have on our lives and the lives of our children? According to a 1982 study conducted for the American Psychiatric Association by Beardslee and Mack, there is widespread feeling among children, even young children, that nuclear war is likely and that they will have no future. The study suggests that "we as adults...suspect that the implications of what we are doing to the emotional development of our young are so horrifying that we would prefer to remain ignorant."

But to what extent are we <u>able</u> to go about "business as usual"? How can we learn about the dangers without being overcome by despair? How can we help our children grow up strong and hopeful if we ourselves so often feel weak and without hope?

Parenting in the Nuclear Age is a group of parents who came together in March of 1982 to address these questions. In meetings with each other and with other parent groups, we have found that some parents have already had to help their children deal with nightmares about nuclear holocaust. Many feel confounded when their children ask about nuclear war. Others are wondering what their kids already know, how or what to tell them, and at what age.

As parents we share the desire to protect our children from debilitating feelings of fear and hopelessness. In our effort to protect, however, we must not silence our children or deny that fear is a healthy emotional response to frightening situations. If we are able to acknowledge fear--both in ourselves and in our children--we are in a better position to move beyond it. Then we can approach this issue in ways that give strength to our kids and to ourselves. It is not by ignoring the arms race, but by struggling to end it, that we will truly protect our children.

CONFRONTING OUR OWN DESPAIR

We have every reason to feel overwhelmed by despair. Indeed, it is hard not to feel desperate when we think of what might happen, when we hear the statements of government officials, and when we read about the Pentagon's plans. This is why many of us try not to think about it.

As parents, many of us also feel guilty about bringing kids into a world such as this. It may help to remember that we did not create the nuclear threat; all we did was to create life.

An important first step is to acknowledge that we cannot possibly isolate ourselves from the nuclear issue. As parents, we have a special commitment to the future and we do know enough to involve ourselves. We are the experts on our children.

We must learn to confront our own despair, to acknowledge that what we fear will not go away but is now part of our lives. The challenge we face is a difficult and unique one. There is no such thing as normal life anymore, if by normal we mean a life free from fears for our planet.

In many ways, talking about nuclear war and the way it makes us feel is taboo. Breaking this isolation and silence, talking with and listening to others, is essential. From this process, we will be able to act with greater assurance in supporting our children. As one parent said, "After all, if I couldn't face the arms race, my kids would have to face it alone."

TALKING WITH KIDS

If we can provide our children with a way to talk about their fear, anger, or confusion about nuclear war, we have told them these feelings are not wrong. We can tell and show our children that talking with people is the best way to start feeling better.

For both adults and children, the unknown is often more frightening than the explained. Remember that many children do not know what they feel before they say it. Help your child gain control of vague feelings by defining them in words.

At times you might ask, "Does that answer your question?" or "Is that what you wanted to know?" to make sure you are on the right track. Leave the discussion open by saying, "These are hard things to talk about for grownups, too. Let's talk about them again soon." Present things honestly, but as positively as possible. Many of us find ourselves ending an explanation with phrases like "and that is why so many of us are working hard to stop nuclear bombs."

Parents have the privilege and responsibility to edit information according to the needs and developmental stages of their children. Try to be clear with yourself why you are not talking about a certain subject. Is it because you feel the topic is too frightening for a child, or because it is too emotionally threatening to you? If you are uncomfortable discussing something, perhaps say, "I'd like to explain this to you, but it's just too sad for me to talk about right now. Let me try to think about it for a few days." Then you have acknowledged your child's questions and feelings as well as shown that you have feelings that must be respected. Sometimes, the best we can do is to hold our children and let them know we are close to them; and often that is what our children most need.

If children say nothing about nuclear war, it doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it. Young children's thoughts often are best revealed in their play. With some older children, you may be able to find out their concerns by talking about the news, school or their friends. You might say, "When I hear about people fighting on the news, I feel _____. What do you feel like?"

Part of the fear of nuclear war is fear of death itself, and you can help your child talk about this too. Our culture prefers to bury the subject of death altogether, but from other cultures and our own best instincts we can draw a description of death as an integral part of life. It is clearer for children to talk about a specific incident like the death of a pet or a garden in the fall than about an abstract concept.

The following observations concerning various ages and stages of development are based in part on the work of educator Sibylle Escalona and in part on our own ideas. They are in no way meant to be rigid, exclusive, or the "last word" on what to do or say. They are just some points from which we can begin to sort things out.

BIRTH TO THREE YEARS:

Life changes dramatically when a new baby arrives. Those of us with infants and toddlers tend to see everything--including the nuclear threat--most clearly from a parenting perspective. Yet we may also wonder how our awareness, our fears or our actions for change link with the often overwhelming process of caring for the very young. In fact, some of the most responsible and creative acts of early parenting may well lay groundwork for building a more peaceful world.

First, we can make little ones feel wonderfully secure in our love and concern <u>for</u> <u>them</u>. Then, when they learn about nuclear (and other) threats, they will feel confident knowing that a loving parent is working on their future's problems. And later still, they will have more of their own strength upon which to draw.

We can expose little kids to nature's pleasures and wonders. Even tiny children seem happiest in natural settings, lying in the grass or watching trees move in the wind. For toddlers, the greatest imaginable joy can be following a colony of ants in a sidewalk crack. Even the biggest cities have birds children can watch and learn to name. And where there are open parks and woods, just allowing toddlers to wander and explore may be one of the most positive things we can do for them and for our future.

In cultures where people's lives are in harmony with all creatures and the earth--such as that of the traditional Hopi Indians--the very idea of nuclear weapons might be unthinkable. As one woman put it, "I really believe our tolerance of the arms race is related to our alienation from our environment."

Toddlers, of course, argue over toys, grow jealous of siblings and parents, and conduct aggressive "investigations" of animal's eyes. How we guide them through the first steps in learning to live cooperatively is yet a third way we prepare them for a less violent future. An approach that works for some parents is to affirm positive rather than negative behavior, and to teach children new patterns to replace the old. Rather than punishing a toddler for pulling the cat's tail ("No, no, bad boy/girl, don't hurt the cat!"), we can show the child a better way to relate to animals and reward that behavior: "Pat the kitty very gently. That's right."

Do not be too hard on yourself or expect "sweet reason" from a two-year-old. In the end, what will matter most is not what we say but what we do. If we respect and celebrate the earth and its many species and peoples, so will the children who grow up in our homes.

AGES FOUR TO SIX:

The relative importance of nuclear fears. A four or five-year-old may be more scared of getting lost in a crowd, or of the monsters in the closet, than of nuclear war. We must not invest their fears with our own values. They are still struggling to control their own emotions and impulses. Anything explosive or violent may remind them of their own struggles. It may be especially scary for them to feel that adults may not have these tendencies under control either. So emphasize the fact that we are working to make sure such things as nuclear war don't happen.

Children of this age need simple and undramatic explanations. Answer their questions honestly, and as concretely and positively as possible, but try to avoid the temptation to give them a moral lecture or scare story. One family explained the reasons for a peace march to their four-year-old like this: "We want to show people that we all want to work together to be friends." When Kathy's five-year-old asked what nuclear bombs were, she answered, "Nuclear bombs are more dangerous than other kinds of weapons. If they are used they could kill many of the people and animals in the world. That is why they must never be used and a lot of people are working hard to stop them from being made."

It is very easy for a small child to misunderstand. One four-year-old, after hearing her mother's careful explanation of her anti-nuclear work, went around for weeks thinking her mother was in a bomb-making group. It might help to ask the child to repeat an explanation in his or her own words to see if any confusion exists.

A child can understand that both kindergartens and countries need to work at peace. When we teach our children to respect people they meet we may be dealing with issues analagous to the nuclear conflict. This respect can be extended to the environment. While walking in the park or planting a garden we can say, "Isn't the world beautiful and special? That's why we must take care of it well."

Children of this age still see their parents as all-powerful. Perhaps the worst fear of all for these children is the fear that they will lose their parents. They need to know that we will be there for them. Even if it makes a parent feel powerful, it is probably not a good idea for a young child to see his mother removed from a civil disobedience action by a police officer. Talking about the same event afterwards can be much more positive. Children need the reassurance of hearing their parents say, "Yes, I'm working on it."

AGES SIX TO TWELVE:

Around the age of seven, children take an enormous step: they learn that other living things have feelings. A child of this age will be horrified when someone steps on a snail, and may have no memory of gleefully smashing them in earlier years. "I would never kill a snail like that!"

Children now begin to understand that other people feel the same range of emotions that they themselves feel. "How would you like it if someone did that to you?" becomes a frequent question. Many parents and teachers use this time to nurture the understanding that all the world's people are part of the same human family. Within our own communities are people of varied socio-economic groups and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Children are now more able to understand that every person has feelings and, furthermore, that the person who seems most different has abilities we admire.

Children ask difficult questions during these years. As their empathy grows, children feel deeply the horror of events they see on television or read about in the newspaper. Their need to talk about these events is strong, and often their questions will be frighteningly specific and personal. Roxanne and her nine-year-old daughter visited an art show by survivors of the bombing of Nagasaki. Her daughter asked, "Would my skin come off in a nuclear war like in the pictures?" Roxanne responded in the most positive way she could: "That's a very scary question for me to think about because I love you so much, but, yes, the truth is it would, and that's why so many of us are working so hard to stop nuclear weapons from being made."

While children of this age have a new appetite for detailed information, they are also refining their sense of morality and justice. They are able to see moral issues in strict terms--good and bad--without understanding the grey areas in between. So they may ask questions such as why do people who are just trying to stop nuclear war get arrested and put in jail. They need to know that their outrage at injustice is valid and shared by many people. We can remind them that their concern about other people's suffering shows that they care about other people's feelings, and that out of this kind of caring comes the movement for a peaceful world.

Other questions may reflect fear for their future. "Do you think I will die in a nuclear war?" was asked repeatedly by a ten-year-old. "We have a very good chance of preventing a nuclear war if we all work together," her mother answered.

Sometimes these fears are expressed indirectly. Ordinary fear of airplanes or sirens may mask fear of nuclear war. One woman remembers as a child asking her parents to read a civil defense billboard in their neighborhood every time they went by it. She didn't want to know what it said about traffic redirection, but what it implied. We can help our kids ask what they really want to ask.

Children are now at an age when they can join others in working for a more peaceful world. They can take action of their own, such as making a sign or writing a letter. (See Things For Kids To Do.)

The adults with whom the child lives are her primary role models and heroes. However, those who inspire us in our work can become heroes also. Susan took her twelve-year-old to hear Helen Caldicott because she believed her daughter should have a role model of a strong woman who was working to make the world safe for us all.

Kids are learning to live in the world with less and less help from their parents, but they are still kids. Do you remember in your childhood fearing "the Russians" or "the atomic bomb"? Did this fear take place between the ages of six and twelve? Now we must be an anchor of hope for our children, as they grapple with the horror of a nuclear holocaust.

It is truly painful for us as parents, because the future holds no reassurance. The comfort which we can provide comes from sharing their feelings and working together to ensure the continuation of life on our planet.

AGES TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN:

Our children are now adults in many ways. Knowledge and skills reach adult levels. Teenagers are eager to be recognized as adult and many assume adult mannerisms and an assertive separation from parents. Idealism is high and a direct manner of speech may reflect an impatience with niceties. They now understand some of the complexities of moral issues. They are sure not only that they now see the truth but also that they are discovering it for the first time. Along with this heightened sense of consciousness, there can be a strong sense of despair.

Plans are being made for the future, but the future is not promising. When young people are questioned about the nuclear issue, a majority feel that their plans, in addition to their daily thinking and feeling, are affected by the nuclear threat. The 1982 study by Beardslee and Mack found that most teenagers feel there will be a nuclear war, that it will not be limited, and that the United States will be ruined.

Some teenagers--like some adults--respond by living for today and planning for the future in only a superficial way. Others, in order to plan for the future, don't let themselves think about nuclear issues. Still others deal with the nuclear issue by working actively to prevent war.

Teenagers can become our partners in creating a safe future for us all. In many parts of the world, they are joining together to work in the anti-nuclear movement. In our community, a group of young people, ages eight to seventeen, organized themselves into a protest group, Life Squad, to demonstrate against the development of nuclear weapons in Livermore, California. About forty Life Squad members, each wearing a headband with the words "Let Us Grow Up," were arrested. Their action was entirely their own. Parents signed permission slips and several acted as a support system providing transportation; but the kids dramatically demonstrated their ability to work without adult assistance.

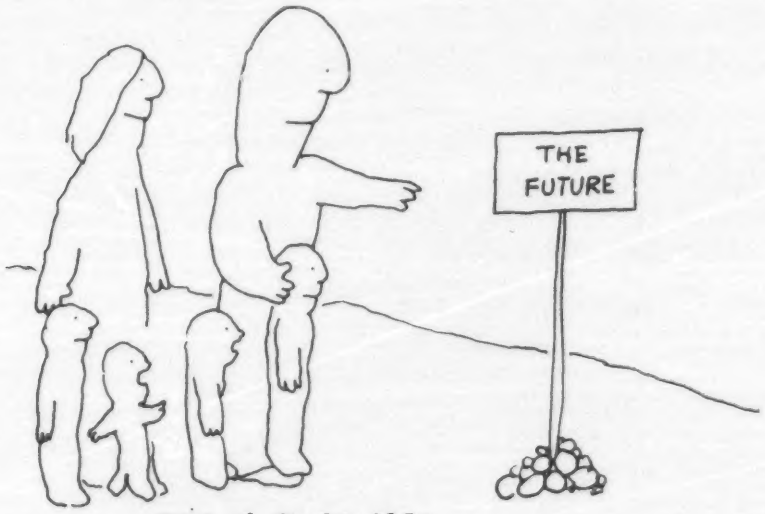
Parents who share lives with teenage activists can help them pace their energy. The passionate commitment of teenagers should be appreciated; but they should be reminded to take care of themselves and to enjoy themselves.

Discussions of history and world affairs can be very stimulating. Teenagers often match or surpass adults in knowledge, and their opinions are valuable. We as adults must be sensitive to a tendency to patronize young people, which can be demeaning.

Many teenagers are not comfortable discussing the nuclear issue with their parents. They gather information in their own way. Parental conversations, radio and television programs are overheard, articles and books are flipped through. Often discussions take place among friends--sometimes prompted by more formal discussions and debates in school.

Parents can invite teenagers to join them in hearing speakers or going to demonstrations. Even if these invitations are refused, it means a lot to teenagers to know they are welcome.

Whatever posture our teenagers assume--living for the moment, denial, or activism--the most important contribution we can make to their mental health is to demonstrate by our actions and words our unflagging commitment to creating a world in which they can live full, productive lives.



THIS IS IT, CHILDREN.

THINGS FOR KIDS TO DO

Giving children information about nuclear weapons is not enough. They must be given the chance to do something about what they have learned, to defend themselves. Taking action gives children strength. Sue, who has two sons, eleven and fourteen, says, "Six months ago my kids were terrified. Since they have become more and more involved in direct actions, like writing letters and demonstrating, the change in their attitude is dramatic. Not that they aren't scared anymore, but they aren't limited by fear. They no longer say, 'I don't want to hear about it.'"

Taking action against nuclear war assumes many forms. Obviously there is a big difference between writing a letter and sitting in at a nuclear reactor. Try to help your kids choose which actions are right for them.

KIDS CAN:

Write a letter to President Reagan.

Although the president may not be immediately convinced to disarm, he does tally opinions expressed in the mail. Your child can share the letter with friends, relatives, school and newspapers. The president's address is: The White House, Washington, DC 20500. Your child will get a reply from the president. Most likely it will be in language difficult for a child to understand. Discuss it. This could be a time to discuss how people around the world have conflicting beliefs and we must work to solve our differences peacefully.

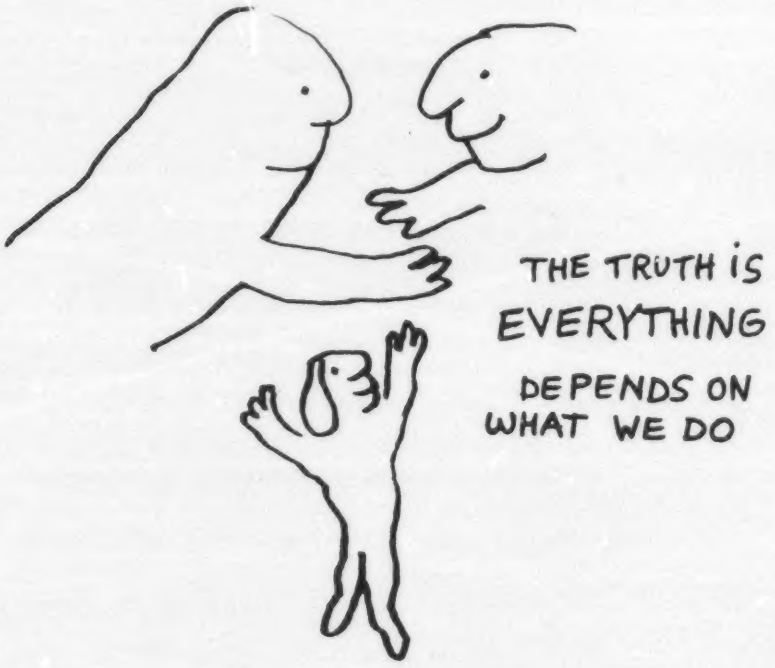
The Children's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is a group of children in Vermont who have collected thousands of letters from children to President Reagan asking for disarmament. On several occasions they have taken full mailbags to Washington and read the letters aloud in front of the White House. Their address is C.C.N.D., Box 550, RD #1, Plainfield, VT 05667.

Telephone the White House.

Children are often eager to use the phone to express themselves. The cost is twenty-six cents for three minutes before 8:00 a.m. from California. A polite operator answers and tallies all comments. One parent says, "We keep the number by the breakfast table. If there's something particular in the morning paper, we call, or maybe we just call anyway." The phone number is (202) 456-7639.

Write a letter to a pen pal in the Soviet Union.

It is important that we see people in other nations as people with feelings much like our own. One good way to do this is to make friends through the mail. You can get the address of a child in the Soviet Union to correspond with through Russian "Pioneer" youth groups in major cities. Write to the Pioneer Palace, International Club, Moscow (or Leningrad, Kiev, etc.), U.S.S.R.



Give up something for peace.

By giving up some special treat--a movie, record, birthday or Christmas present--and donating the money saved to an antinuclear organization, children learn that we have to make sacrifices to build the world we want.

Talk to people.

When kids share their concern for the future of the planet with other kids and adults, it has a special impact. Grownups have been spurred into action by a concerned and informed child. Kids are good at reminding adults what's really important.

Help with group projects.

Peace groups always need volunteers to get out the mail, answer the phone and leaflet. Children and parents can work on these tasks together and make new friends in the process. Kids can help raise money in all sorts of creative ways, from lemonade stands and car washes to puppet shows and antinuclear variety shows. The amount of money raised in each event isn't great, but the feeling of involvement is.

Demonstrate for peace.

If you are going to a nonviolent march or rally, ask your children to come with you. Tell them that every person there makes our statement for peace stronger. Before you do, discuss safe, appropriate ways to behave in a crowd and pack up a few snacks and clothes for a change of weather. Demonstrations often don't stick to their time schedules. Older kids may be able to go on their own or with friends. If you make plans to meet each other, be specific.

Children can also make their own signs, posters and banners. These can make the kids feel that they are a part of the demonstration. "As I was holding this sign that I made, I experienced a new thing," said one eleven-year-old after a demonstration. "I felt I was helping the world to live long."

Join or form a discussion or affinity group.

Kids, usually teenagers, can join their peers in any of these activities, forming a support group for each other, providing a place to educate themselves and talk about their feelings.

Adults have a responsibility to help.

Grownups need to let children know that they are ready to act as resources--by providing moral support, information, transportation. For example, let kids know you would be glad to have a group meeting in your home and to provide a snack.

Be sensitive to the fact that your children are taking responsibility for their own lives and for our planet in a safe and knowledgeable way.

Most important, our kids must be given a chance to decide what they want to do. We can guide, but never push.

GAINING STRENGTH FROM EACH OTHER

Talk with your children about the strength we have as individuals and as a community to say no to war. Talk about the strength that millions of people have when each one, each family, is doing something for peace. Tell your child that this strength gives you hope for the future.

Talk about the times each of you has been brave, and about how that felt. Talk about the things that make you and your kids feel strong: feeling loved, making something, running and jumping, working together with others, singing.

Learn with your child about people who have devoted their lives to peace. Read together from the world's literature and mythology about heroines and heroes who overcame great odds in the struggle for justice. Discuss the future positively. Share your vision of a better world with them. Let kids know that a peaceful, moral way of life is not only worthwhile now, but really does help create a joyful future.

Tell your kids that what they do, no matter how small, is important. They will believe us if we believe in ourselves and our actions. As psychiatrist Robert Lifton concluded from his study on the effects of the nuclear age on kids, "The truth is everything depends on what we do."

FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER WHAT HAPPENS--WHY SHOULD WE BE THINKING ABOUT THIS AT ALL?

The nuclear issue may make us feel more vulnerable and less powerful than any other isue we have had to confront in our lives. But our group's experience has been that working for disarmament and world peace helps to lessen our sense of despair. The anti-war movement and the civil rights movement are examples of effective protest. People control the arms race and people can reverse it.

HOW OLD SHOULD MY KIDS BE BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT THESE ISSUES?

They will let you know, directly or indirectly. Questions should be answered when they are asked and fears should be acknowledged when you recognize them. There is no specific age. Different ages will call for different approaches. (See Talking With Kids.)

ISN'T IT TOO UPSETTING TO KIDS TO TALK ABOUT NUCLEAR WAR?

Discussion of these subjects should never be forced on children, but the fact is that even young kids (ages four, five and six) have often heard about the threat of nuclear war, and may be scared. So we have to prepare ourselves for discussion of these difficult topics. As with other scary subjects, once the child's questions are out in the open, named, and discussed, some of the terror is diminished. Observe. Ask questions. Find out what the child is really thinking. Answer honestly but gently.

MY SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD SPENDS ALL HIS TIME PLAYING VIDEO GAMES. HE'S COMPLETELY CLOSED TO ANY DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. IF HE SAYS ANYTHING, IT'S CYNICAL. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HIM.

This is probably a situation where actions speak louder than words. If you show by your actions that you think there is hope and that you feel a community of purpose with others, it may make more of an impression than your child will admit. Also, kids this age may be influenced by peers and adult friends they respect who share peace work with you.

FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS REALLY THINKING

THE ADULTS IN OUR FAMILY DISAGREE ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND/OR THE WAY TO BUILD PEACE. HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN THAT TO OUR KIDS?

Problems that have come up over disarmament are like other problems that a family must work through together. First, it may help to set aside some time for the adults to discuss the exact differences of opinion and to define the ideas on which you do support each other. Then the family is less likely to be exposed to a surprise onslaught of scary emotions in arguments.

Tell your children that both parents want a peaceful world and explain in simple terms how adults disagree. For example, "Your mom feels that the leaders of this country will stop building nuclear weapons if lots of people go on marches and write letters. That's how she works for peace. I think the leaders of our country know what they're doing and aren't going to do something to hurt us. I work for peace by making our own lives more peaceful."

Make it clear that kids do not have to choose sides. Perhaps say, "It's okay if you think I am wrong sometimes and dad is wrong sometimes. It helps to talk things over. Then we can try to choose the best things to do."

I WORRY THAT IF I SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON PEACE WORK I WON'T BE MEETING MY CHILD'S NEEDS IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

Peace work will take as much time as anyone can give to it, and then more. Some of us need to learn to draw the line when our family life is threatened. Taking care of the immediate environment is part of taking care of the global environment, and vice versa. We need to do both, to fit both into our everyday lives--because our family life is threatened at the global level as well.

Explain to your children that they are doing a big job when they help out at home and share their parents during meetings. One mother began having "animal meetings" with her three-year-old and his stuffed animals. They all sat on the bedroom floor, set an agenda, and took turns "speaking." This helped the child to understand what his mother was doing in all of those evening meetings.

SHOULD I WORRY WHEN MY CHILD PLAYS WAR/SHOOTING GAMES?

Play is one of the main ways children learn about the world. Remember that kids do not necessarily view their games the way you do. What your child experiences as an experiment with power relations or simply an exciting fantasy, you may see as a hostile, antisocial act.

You can suggest other games of courage and excitement--fighting fires, or mountain climbing--just as you offer alternatives to violence to resolve disagreements.

We do not downplay the long-range value of letting your child know how you feel about war and violence. Also, your feelings are entitled to respect. If it upsets you to have guns in your home, you can let your child know that.

WE STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT IN OUR HOUSE.

Conflict is an inescapable reality of all our lives, both inside and outside the family. We may be able to begin building peace when we find creative ways of dealing with conflict at home. The approaches are many, perhaps as varied as the participants. Some parents have set up goals for their families such as these: a resolution to a conflict is peace-full when all parties are "winners," when the process of resolving the conflict leads to increased harmony, and when the participants both want and are enabled to cooperate more fully.

Books and articles some parents have found helpful in examining this topic include: Parenting for Peace and Justice, by McGinnis and McGinnis, Orbis Books; The Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet: A Handbook for Creative Approaches to Living and Problem Solving for Children, by Prutzman et al, Avery Publishing Group, Inc.; Peacemaking: Family Activities for Justice and Peace, by Haessly, Paulist Press; "Nonviolent Parenting," by Heaston, Friends Journal, June, 1982.

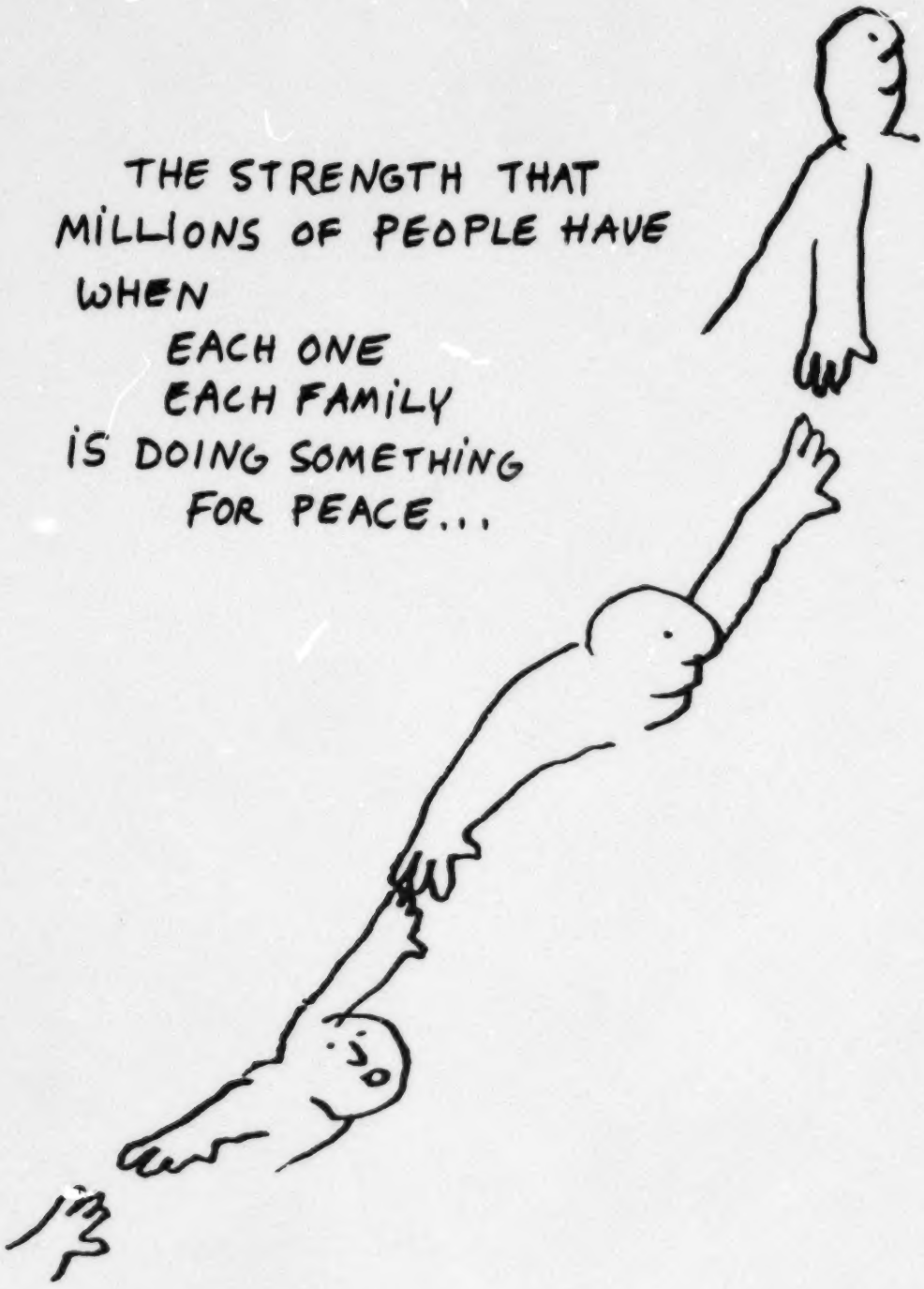
FINDING CONSOLATION AND RENEWAL

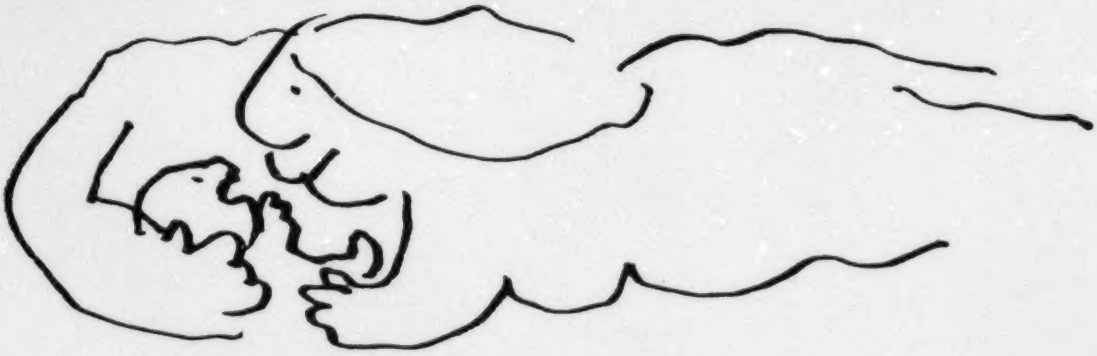
No matter how open we are about the nuclear threat and how much we do to end it, at times we and our children will still feel overwhelmed. In order to get through these times, we can allow ourselves to put thoughts of nuclear dangers out of our minds. We can say to ourselves and to our children, "Do what you can for peace, and when you're not doing that, do something else you care about and enjoy."

We must remember to be kind to ourselves in our role as parents. There are so many ways we can feel "wrong" when we discuss the nuclear issue that we forget how many ways are okay. We feel we must offer our children "the answer" though we know there is no single answer. Coming to grips with such a difficult issue is a process. We must allow ourselves to make mistakes and congratulate ourselves when we find the words and actions that make sense for us and our families.

Finally, we need to recognize the power of so many people being brought together to work for peace. This is an important lesson both for ourselves and our children. Not even the threat of nuclear annihilation can kill the human spirit, or take away our love for each other or our amazement at the life around us.

THE STRENGTH THAT
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE
WHEN
EACH ONE
EACH FAMILY
IS DOING SOMETHING
FOR PEACE...





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